

Steven Wagschal. *The Literature of Jealousy in the Age of Cervantes*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007. 232 pages. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN 978-0-8262-1696-0.

Professor Wagschal begins his book by conceding that the concept of jealousy, as represented in Spanish Golden Age literature (and indeed, as commonly conceived then and now) covers a great range of emotional states with varying components. However, it is this very inconsistency (which he terms *jealousies*) that he finds fruitful, for as a result “jealousy in these early modern texts [is] a flexible, polyvalent designation that resists reduction” (17). He finds particularly useful the analyses of emotion developed by the contemporary philosophers of mind Ronald de Sousa and Peter Goldie, the for-

mer emphasizing that emotional reactions are not antithetical to reason but indeed can be rational reactions to a situation, the latter distinguishing between passing emotions and emotional predispositions or character traits (as in Cervantes's "Celoso extremeño"), and also insisting that analyses of the emotion cannot be separated from the complex relationship of the subject to a variety of objects. Thus to Goldie, the experience of jealousy can only be understood in the context of the narrative of a particular life. Such a conception is naturally convenient for the literary critic whose main interest is the expression of emotions in literary constructs. Just as Wagschal finds the polyvalency of the concept an enticement rather than an impediment to analysis, his use of contemporary philosophers keeps him from merely historicizing emotion: Spanish writers of the 17th century may have construed jealousy in particular ways and endowed it with certain attributes, but there is still such a thing as jealousy that endows his study with contemporary and historical interest. As he says, "The relationship of jealousy to the power of the gods is not a construct of Sartre, Girard or Derrida. On the contrary, Lope de Vega, Cervantes and Góngora each describe forms of jealousy which they compare with the divine, evoking the Greco-Roman or Judeo-Christian gods through a plethora of rhetorical strategies" (189). Indeed this quote sums up Wagschal's approach, for he examines the role of jealousy in a number of plays by Lope, in two novels by Cervantes, and in a few poems of Góngora's, and while he draws on many different forms of analysis (including psychoanalysis), there is a certain privileging of rhetoric, of how language is used to structure a particular version of jealousy.

For Lope, Wagschal draws on a number of quite disparate plays, from near-farcical comedies to the tragic, showing both the varieties of ways in which Lope used jealousy, and also how it tended to be a destabilizing force that had to be reined in or ratified by monarchical intervention. Thus in *Los comendadores de Córdoba*, the betrayed husband Fernando murders not only his wife and lover, but all his servants and even the household pets; these actions, going way beyond the scope of the honor code, can only be explained as a jealous rage, and only be forgiven by an absolute monarch. Wagschal is also interested in how jealousy mediates a transition from deceit/*engaño* (in both the epistemological and sexual senses) to a Baroque self-understanding, *desengaño*. A similar instance of jealousy as "instrumentally rational" (45) occurs in *Peribáñez*, where his suspicious jealousy, exacerbated by the portrait, leads him to discover both the Comendador's perfidy and his wife's fidelity. Yet if these plays represent male-gendered jealousy, what happens when the jealous (and more powerful) protagonist is a woman? Wagschal explores two such instances in plays by Lope, *Arminda celosa* and *El perro del hortelano*. In the first of these, the queen justifiably resents her husband's infidelity, and although throughout the play her jealousy is described as irrational and dangerous, in fact it is (as in the previous two plays) rational and enlightening: the king is in fact deceiving her, her suspicions lead her to discover the lover's identity, and in the end to impose a solution that banishes the lover and yet restores the husband as king. In contrast, *Perro* represents jealousy as a character trait, one of several aspects of her personality that mark Diana as an unstable ruler. What the two plays have (or rather, lack)

in common is husband-murder as a consequence of jealousy; to Wagschal, jealousy in a woman, whether justified or not, is laughable and reinforces the patriarchal ideology of contemporary society. The final pair of plays, *La discreta enamorada* and *El castigo sin venganza*, serve to contrast comic and tragic treatments of similar plot devices. While in the former multiple instances of jealousy are overcome in an almost parodic happy ending, in the latter jealousy conquers all with a force that is almost sublime in its irresistibility; other plays can ratify jealous murder through royal approval, but the duke alone can (and does) authorize the murder of his own wife and son.

To Wagschal, the representation of jealousy in all these plays underlines Lope's conservative political stance. This is not the case with Cervantes, and the two central chapters of the book, examining his treatment of jealousy, will be of most interest to the readers of this journal. Contrasting other readings of "El celoso extremeño" which locate the story's exemplarity in "its condemnation of solipsism or as a defense of the freedom of choice," the author argues "for a complementary reading in which it embodies a religio-aesthetic allegory" (99). Cervantes in this story undermines jealousy as un-Christian (and in fact, implicitly Jewish), and in so doing, attacks the very premise of the *comedia* as practiced by Lope and his colleagues. Carrizales's jealousy is extreme and pathological by both 17th-century and contemporary standards, but also "intelligible and structured" (102); his Jewishness is located in popular associations of both wealth and sexual dysfunction with Jews, but above all in his parody of the jealous God of Hebrew scripture. The old man's jealousy is neither a passing mood nor something brought on by evidentiary experience; it is a fundamental and defining feature of his character, a trait that echoes the description of Jehovah in Exodus 34:14. Carrizales too creates a kind of Edenic environment for Leonora, gives her companions, makes a covenant with them, forbids graven images, etc. Yet this is brought down by the Satan-like cunning of Loaysa, who gradually insinuates himself into their company. However, at the crucial moment when Carrizales discovers Loaysa in bed with his wife and as he is about to grab a knife and murder them, in accordance with the honor code as it plays out in Lope's plays, he sets Leonora free and goes off to bed to die; to Wagschal, this represents the passing of the old law, and the triumph of love over jealousy. The scene in which Carrizales recognizes his fundamental dishonor, in the sexual sense, is the moment in which he also recognizes its twin, his lack of *pureza de sangre*. Cervantes thus undermines the hegemonic ideological codes associated with the *comedia*, but only by projecting them onto the socially-despised other.

The condemnation of jealousy pervades Cervantes's other works, including the dramas, the *Quijote*, and for the most part, the *Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* as well. The latter work, however, also contains a kind of Christian sublimation of jealousy, its incorporation within a theory of love. True love can perhaps be free from jealousy (*celos*), Persiles/Periandro argues, but his beloved counters (and he agrees) that it can never be entirely free from fear (*temores*). The latter is a kind of suspicious jealousy, insofar as anyone who possesses something of value always fears losing it. This kind of jealous fear is positive for it is related to the protection impulse, one that is necessarily

gendered male. Thus female jealousy, as in Lope, has no place, nor does any jealousy that leads to actual doubts about the beloved's fidelity. Wagschal extends this analysis to other works of Cervantes: the discussion of "envidia noble" in the prologue to part two of the *Quijote*; Anselmo's lack of an appropriate, protective jealousy in the "Curioso impertinente"; and the lack of jealousy among the barbarians in the *Persiles*, who oblige a bride to have sex with the groom's relatives. Given that the protagonist of this novel is a representation of the Christian hero, his defense of jealousy must be taken as an articulation of its place in a Christian concept of erotic love. As Wagschal concludes, "he [Persiles] not only feels jealousy, but knows what it is and when it is appropriate to experience it" (135).

The final chapters examine some poems of Góngora's, beginning with the famous *canción* "Qué de invidiosos montes"; Wagschal relates this poem to the iconographic tradition of the mythological Vulcan-Venus-Mars triangle, seeing in the poem a conflation of two versions of the myth. The variants differ on whether Mars is Venus's husband or her adulterous lover, and the presence of both in the poem in turn reflects an ambivalence on the part of the jealous poetic speaker, who is drawn to imagine their love-making, yet also resists that impulse, by having his imagination arrive too late to witness their coupling. Similarly, the death-like state of the husband in the poem can reflect both a post-coital trance and a wish, on the lover/speaker's part, that he would die. In the *romancillo* "Las flores del romero" the speaker counsels a jealous young woman that these feelings are transitory and that when she reconciles with her lover, what are today's flowers will become tomorrow's honey. Wagschal contrasts the delicate beauty of the poem, with its subtle but intricate imagery, to the sublime representation of jealousy in the sonnet "O niebla del estado más sereno" and in the *Polifemo*, "wherein the subject's reason and imagination are overwhelmed by a scene of such great magnitude or power that it defies the subject's conceptual ability" (166). Significantly, both of these are representations of a masculine jealousy, as opposed to the female jealousy of the *romancillo*.

To Wagschal the variety or polyvalency of jealousy is precisely what makes it so open to association with other ideological phenomena, "in which rhetoric is intricately linked to issues of race, class, gender, morality, epistemology, and aesthetics" (189). In the conclusion he speculates that the power of the emotion in seventeenth-century Spain is linked to "national suspicion and possessiveness, which arose from the perceived threat of enemies from both without and within. Ultimately, the beloved whose protection Lope justifies with jealousy is Spain herself, as the Spanish monarchy and inquisitors perceived themselves as assaulted by engaño plots from both water and land" (190). I appreciated the breadth of Wagschal's study, which draws on examples from all three principal literary genres, by three of the most important authors at the beginning of the 17th century. Moreover, he treats well-known works as well as obscure ones: *Peribáñez* and *El perro del hortelano*, but also *Los comendadores de Córdoba* and *Arminda celosa*, plays I must confess I knew nothing about. Similarly, the Cervantes section treats a very familiar short novel, and the notoriously long and difficult *Persiles*,

and for Góngora he analyzes two well-known poems along with an unstudied ballad and sonnet. So the study is a significant pushing out from the conventional canon. The book is everywhere clearly written, and his arguments well-marshaled and always, at the very least, plausible. Admittedly, I am not convinced about every single detail (for example, Cervantes's anti-semitic rhetoric in "El celoso extremeño"), and I wish he had written more about *Castigo sin venganza* and the *Persiles* and of course the *Quijote*, but on the other hand I appreciated the complete trajectory of his thesis, and I found the Góngora section, in particular, exceptionally nuanced and innovative, in a discussion of poems that I thought I knew very well. This is work of high quality indeed, and it lives up to the promise of Wagschal's earlier articles on Renaissance literature and the visual arts.

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